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FM AMCONSUL DUBAI
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AMCONSUL DUBAI

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [AMGT](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: IRAN EARTHQUAKE ROCKS DUBAI

11. (U) SUMMARY: On 10 September 2008, an earthquake centered between Iran's southern port city Bandar Khamar and Qesham Island, which reportedly measured 6.1 on the Richter scale, could be felt across Dubai, UAE. The 35 story Dubai World Trade Center, home of US Consulate General Dubai, swayed and shook significantly; , the Consulate General was locked down and staff evacuated on a precautionary basis. There were no casualties or significant damage, and post resumed normal operations 11 September. .

12. (U) At approximately 1530 hrs, on Wednesday 10 September 2008, staff and visitors of US Consulate General Dubai, felt the building begin to shake and sway continuously for several seconds. The shaking was apparently the result of an earthquake measuring 6.1 in magnitude, with its epicenter close to the Iranian coast's port city of Bandar Khamar.

13. (SBU) The Consulate is located on the 20th and 21st floors of the Dubai World Trade Center (WTC). The WTC was constructed in the 1970s and stands as the oldest high rise structure in the Gulf region. With this in mind, at approximately 1533 hrs. RSO initiated the evacuation siren and made an announcement over the public address system informing all staff to secure classified and evacuate the Consulate's two floors. All Consulate personnel and visitors evacuated in an orderly fashion using two internal stairwells. The Consul General, RSO, ARSO, MGT Officer and Guard Force coordinated much of the evacuation.

14. (SBU) All staff and visitors were guided to a previously designated evacuation staging point, after descending 20 - 21 flights of stairs to the ground level. All personnel were accounted for by section heads and floor wardens, who reported to the RSO. ARSO notified the Diplomatic Security Command Center, the Operations Center, and Embassy Abu Dhabi. U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi's Charge d Affaires, who happened to be visiting the Consulate, was fully briefed at the staging area. Following full accountability and consultation with the RSO, the CG mandated a closure of the Consulate for the remainder of the day.

15. (SBU) RSO contacted Dubai Civil Defense and requested an inspection of the building. Civil Defense declined to do so, stating that the building was well built and the quake had not been significant enough to warrant such action. Note: RSO and Civil Defense maintain a good relationship regardless of this incident.

16. (SBU) At approximately 1640 hrs, RSO and CG led a group of key Consulate personnel and section heads back into the building to ensure that sensitive materials and areas were properly secured. At approximately 1730 hrs all remaining Consulate employees and LGF departed the building.

17. (SBU) On 11 September CG, RSO and MGT shared lessons learned from the event. Based upon that discussion, RSO and ARSO began modification of evacuation procedures intended to improve upon the existing system. Among the planned initiatives, RSO will conduct floor warden training, re-issue post evacuation instructions, and send out security notices reminding employees of their responsibilities during emergencies. Note: RSO already has plans in place for monthly all-hands drills including fire and evacuation.

18. (U) No visible damage was observed within the Consulate or the WTC. No damage was reported in Dubai. On 12 September media reports indicated that the UAE government had announced a plan to establish an Emirates National Web site for monitoring and tracking future seismic activity in the country.

SUTPHIN